

THE TRAVANCORE PREVENTION OF ADULTERATION BILL.

Mr. N. Ramakrishna Pillai: I beg to introduce the Travancore Prevention of Adulteration Bill and move that the Bill be read in the Council.

Mr. S. Narayana Aiyar: I second it.

TITLE OF THE BILL.

Secretary: The title of the Bill shall be "The Travancore Prevention of Adulteration Bill."

The motion was put to vote and carried.

Mr. N. Ramakrishna Pillai: Honourable members are aware that there is a law to prevent adulteration of foodstuffs. Act IV of 1106. That Act relates only to the prevention of adulteration in regard to articles of food. Government consider it is necessary to widen the scope of this Act so as to include all kinds of articles—articles of a commercial character as also manufactured articles and articles of every kind. The scheme of the Act is to authorise Government to notify in the Government Gazette such articles as in the opinion of the Government should be brought under the Provisions of this Act. Honourable members will see from the definition of 'notified article' that the expression means any article to which the Act is made applicable by the Government by notification in the Government Gazette; whenever therefore Government consider it necessary to bring a particular article under the provisions of this Act, it is enough to notify the article in the Gazette. As soon as the article is notified in the gazette, the provisions of the Act will apply to such an article.

Honourable members will also be aware that under the existing Food Adulteration Act, local bodies are given power to get the food which is considered to be deleterious examined by a Public Analyst. The whole responsibility of putting the provisions of the Act into operation is thrown upon the Local Bodies, but there is no coordination between local bodies in this matter. It is left to the sweet will and pleasure of the local authorities to see whether a particular article of food is adulterated or not. There is no compulsion on the part of these local bodies to see that these articles are analysed and action taken under the provisions of the Act. For this purpose an important provision is made in the present Bill. Honourable members will see that section 3 empowers Government to appoint either the Director of Public Health or any other officer to see to the proper working of this Act. Any officer could be empowered to inspect, control and supervise the action taken by the local authorities under this Act. This is a special provision which has been considered necessary for the efficient working of this Act.

Again, Government are also empowered from time to time to define the powers of the officers so appointed to see to the proper working of this Act. It will be seen from clause 4 that the Director of Public Health or any other officer appointed by the Government under Section 3, may, from time to time, as occasion requires, recommend for adoption to the local authorities such measures as may be necessary for carrying out the purposes of the Act in any local area. The scheme of the Act is that the provisions of the Act should be carried out in the first place, by local authorities—local authorities are defined to include not only local bodies but even Tahsildars in places where there are no local bodies. The most important function of the Director of Public Health or any other officer appointed by Government is to give directions to the local authorities to see that the Act is brought into operation in respect of any particular article. If the local bodies are negligent, it is open to the officer concerned to ask them to take action in respect of any particular article and see that the provisions of this Act are brought into force in respect of that article.

There is another special feature of this Act, which requires mention and that is, not only the local bodies but also Government are empowered to take action in regard to any articles, if in the opinion of Government, any such action is required. For instance, take the case of shark liver oil, which is a manufactured article; if it is not up to the standard, it is open to the Government to appoint an officer for the purpose of seeing that the purity of the article is kept up to the standard and that it is manufactured in the proper way. Again, a provision is made in the Bill that if in the opinion of Government, any local authority fails or is unable to do its duty under the Act, the Government may authorise by notification in the Gazette any officer to perform that duty. Thus the special features of this Act are, in the first place, not only local authorities but also in cases where there are no local authorities, the Tahsildars are empowered to bring the provisions of the Act into operation in respect of any particular article. Then, if the local authorities are negligent, it is open to the officer who is specially appointed for co-ordinating the work of the local authorities to see that the local authorities are properly enforcing the provisions of this Act. These officers could therefore enforce the provisions of the Act and ask the local authorities concerned to do their duty under this Act.

Another feature of this Act as already adverted to, is that it is also open to Government, in cases where local authorities do not do their work, or where Government consider it necessary to do so, to put the provisions of the Act into operation in respect of

[Mr. N. Ramakrishna Pillai]

any article to appoint an officer for the purpose and see that the particular standard expected of it is properly maintained. Many of the provisions are those contained in the Food Adulteration Act which is already in force. Several important improvements have been made in regard to the existing provisions in that Act. I may also bring to the notice of the house the fact that in British India, there was a Committee and that committee had made certain recommendations for the improvement of the provisions in the existing Act. All those suggestions have been incorporated in the Bill and as it was thought that a more comprehensive measure would be the appropriate thing the Government have considered it necessary to recast the whole enactment and bring it out as a comprehensive measure repealing the old and re-enacting in a new form an Act with all these important provisions included in it.

Mr. S. Narayana Aiyar: Second its reference to

President: Before the Bill is further discussed upon, I may point out that Government have considered it imperative that some such measure should be placed on the statute book especially with regard to the increasing industrial development of this country. Quite recently, we found to our astonishment, that shark liver oil was being sold with 50 to 60 per cent. of groundnut oil. There was no possible way of preventing it, because it was not an article of food in the ordinary acceptance. The Government of Travancore through the Fisheries Department sold 100 per cent. shark liver oil. There were others who were mixing up much of groundnut oil. The result was that all over India, wherever shark liver oil was sold generally the idea was that the shark liver oil was the monopoly product of Travancore. It was that shark liver oil combined with groundnut oil did not produce good results. Thereupon notifications were published to the effect that the Travancore Government will only sell what may be called certificated shark liver oil which is 100 per cent. shark liver oil. But that is one aspect of the matter. At a time when we were likely to obtain practically a monopoly of starch, owing to our tapioca being very much in request, it was found, and the matter was reported to me by friends who are leading millowners both in Bombay and Ahmedabad, that they deliberately purchased Travancore starch manufactured from Tapioca because they took it for granted that it would be a first-class product. It was found that there was flour mixed with it as well as little bits of sand and a certain amount of unseparated tapioca fibre and we were about to lose a market. If products are not absolutely first rate, we shall lose the importance of Travancore as an industrial centre, and it is well therefore to have an Act. If honourable members think that it

THE TRAVANCORE PREVENTION OF ADULTERATION BILL. 91

should be improved in the matter of giving more control to the Legislature, it could be done, but the general principle may be commended to this house.

Mr G. Narayana Aiyar : I should like to have a doubt cleared about the purpose of this Act. The Statement of Objects and Reasons states : "It is considered desirable to take power to prohibit the admixture of substances which are not themselves injurious to health. Government also consider it necessary to undertake legislation to deal with adulteration of all articles and not merely of articles of food." But then, the title of the Bill is simply "Travancore Prevention of Adulteration Bill." I should like to know whether under the provisions of the Act, the adulteration that is being practised in Ayurvedic medicines could be checked.

President : I am afraid that is not practical politics, because Ayurvedic medicines today are prepared according to the old methods. There are no pill-making machines. According to the finger of the person the size of the pills varies. Secondly, the strength is not designated. A prescription is given in Allopothy in so many drams, ounces etc. These prescriptions are not in existence in Ayurvedic tinctures or medicines. How is the honourable member going to deal with adulteration? Supposing it is gold bhasnam. There is no gold in it. What gold there is in it is supposed to be worked upon by certain herbs or it goes into Sinduram powder. Supposing there is no gold at all in it, but a little bit of pappadom powder (Laughter) how is it to be tested?

Mr. G. Narayana Aiyar : A competent committee has to be appointed.

President : At present there is a Committee which is examining some specimens of the Ayurvedic medicines. Siddhakalpa makaradvaja is being examined with a view to find essentially, accidentally or incidentally, what the ingredients are supposed to do. That kind of thing is being done in the Madras Ayurvedic Institute. It is done in the Calcutta University and also in the Travancore University. But short of the results, it is impossible to deal with Ayurvedic medicines on the basis of adulteration.

Mr. N. Ramakrishna Pillai : Sir, I beg to move that the Bill be referred to a Select Committee consisting of the following gentlemen :—

- 1 Mr. V. N. Padmanabha Pillai
- 2 " M. Mohamed Mustafa
- 3 " K. G. Narayana Panicker
- 4 " M. K. Velu Pillai
- 5 " M. Govindan

- 6 Mr. A. Gabriel Nadar .
- 7 „ K. C. Chandy
- 8 „ D. Krishnan Potti
- 9 „ S. Veeriah Reddiar, and
- 10 „ G. Ravi Varma.

The motion was put to vote and carried.

President : The business for the day being over, the House will adjourn and meet again to-morrow at 11 A. M.

The House adjourned at 4.5 P. M.

S. VAIDYANATHA AIYAR,
Secretary to the Sri Chitra State Council.
